# Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Board of Overseers Meeting National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Wednesday, December 5, 2024, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM ET, Virtual

**MINUTES** 

#### **Attendees**

Overseers: Gerry Agnes, Angela Brandt, Ray Floyd, Margot Hoffman, Theresa Meadows, David Morales, Loyce Pailen, Julie Thyne, Tom Tribone

Not present: Mike Koralewski, Janet Souter, Mathew Watson

Judges: Cary Hill

NIST: Jamie Ambrosi, Dawn Bailey, Rebecca Bayless, Michelle Beddow, Robyn Decker, Mary Eastman, Robert Fangmeyer, Harry Hertz, Elif Karakas, Scott Kurtz, Eric Lin, Darren Lowe, Christine Schaefer, LouAnn Scott, Suzanne Sullivan, Kelly Welsh

Guests: Al Faber, Stephanie Norling

Start: 10:03 am

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Robert Fangmeyer, director of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, welcomed all and shared that the new overseers have been officially approved by the Secretary of Commerce. He introduced guests and noted the overseers entering into their final terms.

Eric K. Lin, acting associate director for Innovation and Industry Services at NIST, expressed appreciation for the Baldrige Program, and thanked the overseers for their contributions to ensure its success.

Gerry Agnes, chair of the Board of Overseers, thanked all for the wonderful experience of serving during such an exciting time for the Baldrige Program.

#### **Baldrige Program Update and Discussion**

Fangmeyer provided an update on program operations and accomplishments.

#### Baldrige Program Purpose/Mission

To improve the quality, performance, and long-term success of businesses and other organizations by

- Recognizing role models
- Fostering the adoption of proven practices
- [Fostering a nation-wide ecosystem]

#### 2024 Baldrige Award Process

Fangmeyer reviewed the changes made to the award process as a part of the Baldrige Reimagined effort:

- Streamlined process to identify role models of resilience and long-term success, both of which are outcomes of a focus on overall performance excellence
- Simplified award criteria and evaluation rubric that focuses on performance results to identify potential role models
- The use of standardized evaluation worksheets within an online evaluation platform
- Increased recognition opportunities by publicly announcing award finalists, and highlighting their model best practices

Other highlights of the 2024 process include:

- 29 Eligibility submissions
- 16 Award applicants
- 9 Finalists received site visits
- Judges met from September 9 to 13 and recommended 5 Award recipients
- Evaluation reports and surveys have been sent to all applicant organizations
- Opportunities for improvement have been and are being identified

#### Update from the Judges Panel

Fangmeyer invited Cary Hill, chair of the Judges Panel, to provide the judges perspective on the 2024 award process.

Hill said the changes to the process were overwhelmingly positive and of good integrity. The materials received by judges to determine role-model organizations were appropriate and adequate. The simplified evaluation by examiners allowed judges to focus on critical thinking/dialogue and understanding the applicant's organization.

Hill then reviewed the 2024 Baldrige Award Recipients, highlighting one or two key attributes of each.

- Alamo Colleges District (Education)
- City of Henderson, Nevada (Nonprofit)
- Chickasaw Nation Department of Health (Health Care)
- Freese and Nichols, Inc. (Service)
- Northeast Delta Dental (Nonprofit)
- Best Practice Spotlight: Southcentral Foundation (Health Care)

#### **Baldrige Executive Fellows**

Dawn Bailey, Baldrige Executive Fellows program manager, provided an update on the 2024/2025 cohort.

- Cohort consists of 18 senior leaders representing all sectors of the economy
- Using the Baldrige Excellence Framework as their guide, the fellows discuss all aspects of leadership and its challenges during the year-long fellowship
- Through on-site visits, the fellows explore Baldrige Award recipients' best practices and tools to improve their own organizations
  - Meeting 1: In-depth meeting with various Baldrige Award recipients at the 35<sup>th</sup> Quest for Excellence® Conference

- Meeting 2: Hosted by Baldrige Award recipient GBMC HealthCare, Inc., in Towson, MD.
   Also met with a representative from Baldrige Award recipient Stellar Solutions
- O Meeting 3: Hosted by Baldrige Award recipient the Kansas City National Security Campus (formerly Honeywell Federal Manufacturing and Technologies) and also met with the CEO of Baldrige Award recipient Mid-America Transplant. Representatives from the City of Excelsior Springs, MO, the first community in the nation to be honored by Communities of Excellence 2026 (COE2026) with silver recognition, also met with the Fellows.
- Meeting 4: Next hosted at The Ritz-Carlton, Marina del Rey in January 2025 and focus on customers and workforce. They will hear from executives from The Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center and Marriott, as well as executives from Alamo Colleges District, the Charter School of San Diego, and Adventist Health White Memorial
- Meeting 5: Graduate Saturday, March 29, 2025, and the next cohort of Fellows will begin their journeys.

Bailey also shared that a key aspect of the program is the creation of a capstone project that will improve something of significance at the Fellows' own organizations. Fellows work on their capstone throughout the year and make a formal presentation at the closing session, immediately prior to graduating.

#### 35th Quest for Excellence®

Fangmeyer provided an overview of the Quest for Excellence conference, held April 7-10, 2024, and that the conference earned a Net-Promoter Score of 60, which is considered a world-class level of customer engagement.

- Opening keynote, Shola Richards: "Unstoppable Resilience™: The Keys to Staying Strong During Any Challenge"
- Closing keynote Robert Martichenko: Creating meaningful employment environments
- Plenary sessions on organizational resilience and future emerging challenges, "Q&A Talk Show"
- Presentations such as people-centric leadership and social responsibility, innovation strategic deployment, workforce issues, community excellence, and emotional intelligence
- Pre-conference workshops for beginner and intermediate users of the Baldrige Criteria

#### **Looking Ahead to 2025**

Fangmeyer then shared a preview of what was to come in 2025.

#### 36th Quest for Excellence®

- Will be held March 30–April 2, 2025, at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, Baltimore, MD
- Will include the formal award ceremony for 2024 Baldrige Award Recipients
- There will be multiple keynote speakers: Tucker Bryant, poet and innovation keynote speaker; José Pires, founder and CEO, Global Excellence and Innovation; Ron Norris, director of innovation, Georgia-Pacific, LLC; Michael Koralewski, chief supply chain officer, First Solar; and Rami Goldratt, CEO, Goldratt Group
- Plenary and concurrent sessions on Criteria-based best practices
- Relevant topics of interest, such as leadership and social responsibility, operational continuity and resilience, workforce issues, and customers and strategy

#### 2025 Award Process

Kelly Welsh, program manager, provided an update on the 2025 award process, starting with what is not changing:

- Focus is on identifying role models, primarily through their performance results
- Using streamlined criteria (300+ to about 54 questions) and a simplified evaluation rubric
- Leveraging an online award application platform, developed in-house
- Ensuring an objective evaluation by trained experts
- Most everything else

#### Welsh then shared what is changing in 2025:

- Adjust calendar and milestones to provide more time for organizations to prepare and submit their applications
- Tweak award criteria and evaluation rubrics to make them more clear and direct
- Clarify questions, guidance, and instructions, moving much of the guidance into the sections to be closest to the questions, so that instructions will not be missed
- Develop and provide more samples, including what kinds of data were being requested

Welsh then provided an overview of the award criteria and process timeline.

#### **Baldrige Excellence Framework Revisions**

Fangmeyer described the objectives of the process to revise the framework in 2025:

- Incorporate needed content changes based on research and input
- Enhance utility and value as a maturity model improvement guide
- Simplify and streamline for ease of understanding and use

#### Fangmeyer provided additional context for this revision, noting:

- This is the second transformative change the Program is implementing in just two years
- These changes have major impact on the entire Baldrige community, especially Alliance programs who use the framerwork as the basis for their evaluation and recognition offerings
- BPEP is delaying the traditional revision timeline to permit additional layers of review and input
- BPEP anticipates that the changes will result in wider use, greater value, more consistency across programs, and the opportunity for new offerings
- There is a long-term vision of an integrated, interactive, online platform intended to replace or supplement the framework booklet

#### Prescreen "Fast-Track"

Fangmeyer provided a refresher on the prescreen process that the overseers reviewed and supported for the 2024 award process. He noted that ultimately, the design and development of the process, application of the screening, the identification and vetting of candidate organizations, and approval of messaging, took longer than expected and made it impossible to invite prescreened organizations into the 2024 award process. The prescreen will be implemented in 2025.

#### Things to know:

- Company will complete parts of the application and go through site visit and judging process
- We are more likely to successfully engage business units/divisions and intend to encourage prescreened organizations to nominate one of their high-performing sub-units

We anticipate challenges in recruiting and request suggestions from the overseers

This led into a discussion on key messaging for the program and the award process, highlighting what is currently in use and requesting additional suggestions and recommendations for how to reach and engage with our target audiences.

#### Report from the Alliance for Performance Excellence (Alliance)

Margot Hoffman, Vice Chair, Alliance for Performance Excellence; President, Partnership for Excellence (IN, IL, OH, WV) provided the update.

The Alliance is a nearly 20-year-old nonprofit network that serves to inspire individual, organizations, and communities across the US and world to learn, implement, and achieve performance excellence. The Alliance has worked the last year-and-a-half on resetting its organizational pillars--purpose, mission, vision, values—and most recently on completing a revision of its core values & companion expected behaviors.

# (re)Introducing the Alliance for Performance Excellence

**Purpose:** To inspire individuals, organizations, and communities across the U.S. and the world to learn, implement, and achieve performance excellence.

**Mission:** To strengthen members through training, mentoring, collaboration, and sharing of resources, best practices, and service offerings.

**Vision**: To be the premier resource for organizations and communities desiring to achieve and sustain excellence.

**Core Values:** Act with Integrity, Value People, Collaborate, Focus on Excellence

Founded in 2005, the Alliance is the network of Baldrige-based programs & other members supportive of performance excellence.



We're one of the

important entities within the Enterprise – considered the entry point for many organizations & communities who want to start or accelerate their journey to excellence.

She presented the Alliance's 2024 plan that presents value proposition, core values, scorecard, and strategic priorities, as well as the purpose, mission, and vision.

#### **Who the Alliance Serves**

Key Customers of the Alliance are its members.

- Program Members that provide education, training, evaluation, recognition, and feedback to organizations on their performance excellence journey.
- General Members that collaborate with the Alliance to grow performance excellence.

Member benefits are designed to further members' ability to achieve success.

#### Key stakeholders are:

- End customers that want to improve using the Baldrige Excellence Framework
- Come from all sectors (business, healthcare, education, government, & non-profits)
- Are all sizes of organizations

#### Alliance Program stats!

2023 Survey Data

#### 29 Baldrige-based programs serving all 50 states & US Territories

- 941 Applications received (up from 617)
  - 63 full 50 page (up from 59)
- 14 Top-Tier Award Recipients
- 998 Examiners trained (up from 970)
- 10 Conferences (hosted 1,543 attendees)
- 25 Paid staff, 184 non-examiner volunteers
- ~\$9M Estimated combined budget

She notes that the 2024 Alliance board of directors and staff are all volunteers.

#### **ALLIANCE PRODUCTS**

#### **Baldrige Fall Conference**

- Plan, produce, and deliver a Conference featuring national Baldrige & Alliance Award Recipients and dynamic keynote speakers. Includes:
  - One day pre-conference workshops featuring Baldrige-based workshops
  - Awards ceremony
  - One day conference with sessions in multiple tracks.
  - (optional) tours/site visits
- Led by an Alliance Conference Committee; Hosted by Alliance Members (selected by RFP)

#### **Alliance University**

- Current shared drive of proven tools, templates & materials
- Future Integrated University

She said the university focus is as follows:

Use existing resources: Leverage the National Baldrige Bridge and other existing resources to quickly deploy the Baldrige Program Alliance platform. Use the materials, training, and resources already available through the National Baldrige Bridge and member programs. Avoid reinventing the wheel.

Minimize customization: Avoid reinventing the wheel and instead focus on adapting the existing framework to meet the needs of the Baldrige Program members.

Streamline onboarding: Provide a one-stop-shop for new Baldrige Programs to access onboarding materials, including Baldrige 101, Examiner Training, and National Awards Requirements.

Offer scalable solution: Design the platform to accommodate the growing number of Baldrige Programs and their leadership, ensuring a seamless experience for all users.

Approach collaboratively: Encourage Baldrige Programs to share their best practices and contribute to the collective knowledge base, fostering a collaborative environment.

Standardize onboarding process and maintenance: Develop a consistent onboarding experience for new state-level Baldrige programs, including Baldrige 101, Examiner Training, LMS use, and Criteria overviews. Maintain a process for what documents are stored, naming convention, and file structure.

Share best practices: Encourage member programs to contribute their successful practices, documents, and training materials to the shared repository, creating a centralized knowledge base.

Maintain an abundance mindset: Foster a spirit of cooperation among member programs, focused on sharing knowledge and insights rather than competing. The membership committee agreed we would model the way.

# **Alliance University - Future System**

#### Learning Management System (LMS) Database

A centralized, computerbased platform that hosts onboarding content and training materials for programs using the Baldrige Framework. This database serves as a one-stop shop for accessing and sharing resources.

#### Onboarding PowerPoint Presentations

Standardized PowerPoint decks covering key topics such as Baldrige 101, Examiner Training, Criteria, and National Awards Requirements. These presentations provide consistent onboarding and continuous training for programs using the Baldrige Framework.

#### Maintenance and Administration

The LMS will be maintained and administered by a dedicated individual or program, ensuring the content is up-to-date and accessible to all Baldrige programs. This will be supported through membership fees.

#### **Incentive System**

A value system that credits Baldrige programs for uploading and sharing their own documents and best practices, encouraging participation and knowledge sharing within the Alliance.

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#### **Preparing for Alliance's Future**

- Transformation initiatives due to changes to national program
- Challenges due to the aftermath of COVID & other factors
- Consolidation of programs
- Identifying new review streams

#### Save the Date & attend the 2025 Baldrige Fall Conference

- October 2025 in Boulder/ Denver, Colorado
- Updates to be posted to BaldrigeConference.org

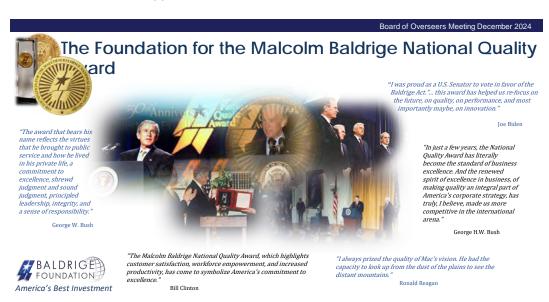
#### Explore the value of getting started (or accelerating) your journey to excellence using Baldrige

Contact your Alliance member program at <a href="http://baldrigealliance.org">http://baldrigealliance.org</a>

### Report from the Baldrige Foundation (Foundation)

Al Faber, President and CEO of the Baldrige Foundation provided the update.

Faber reported on the work of the Baldrige Foundation, in terms of its advocacy for Baldrige, work with the Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Management (CAHME), fundraising, thought leadership/CEO roundtables, the Federal Foresight Advocacy Alliance, Quest conference sponsorships, and the Foundation's support of Communities of Excellence 2026.



www.baldrigefoundatio n.org



Faber reported on the Foundation's advocacy to support Baldrige. He also noted that big changes are coming on the membership of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies. He said the FY2025 Federal budget request has been submitted. The FY2026 process is starting now.

The Foundation has been active in the CAHME, including giving leadership awards during meetings. This has had great impact in continuing to interest CAHME members in Baldrige. CAHME accredits 153 academic programs in healthcare management, so it's a great fit for students to learn about Baldrige.

In terms of fundraising, the Foundation has achieved the 2024 Platinum Seal of Transparency on Candid. The rating places the Foundation in the top 0.1% of charities nationally in terms of transparency. Faber also noted the Mac Baldrige Society Institute trustees and that another would soon be announced.







For Communities of Excellence 2026, the Foundation was a framework sponsor and offered administrative support (assisting in finalizing COE's IRS990 and automating invoicing). The Foundation also supported COE through a quarterly webinar series.

Faber then thanked the donors and sponsors to the Baldrige Foundation and the Mac Baldrige Society Institute trustees. Their support makes the work of the Foundation possible.

The overseers encouraged the Foundation to continue partnerships like the one with ACHE, and to consider partnerships in manufacturing, cyber, etc.

## Report from Communities of Excellence 2026 (COE 2026),

Stephanie Norling, President/CEO, COE 2026 provided the update.

# Who We Are

Mission: Improve the quality of life for our nation's residents by assisting communities in implementing the Baldrige based Communities of Excellence Framework.

Vision: High-performing, vibrant communities

Values: Transparency, Collaboration, Inclusion, Continuous Learning

Purpose: To ensure that every person in America has the opportunity to live their best life in communities that are thriving.

Envisioned Future: Communities that adopt the Baldrige-based Communities of Excellence Framework are recognized as the top-performing in the nation and are catalysts for our country to again lead the world in educational attainment, economic prosperity, health and wellness, and quality of life.

communities of excellence. 2026

Norling said the October 2024 Communities of Excellence conference was held in Coral Gables, FL and was very successful with about 100 attendees. The Housing workshop with Lincoln Institute was one of the best sessions and was followed by very engaged roundtables.



Norling spoke about new resources being developed by COE:

**Building Strong Teams for CollaborACTION:** Participants prepare to establish a multi-sector team of partners who can effectively work together to address a shared priority. In addition to learning group composition, processes, and skills, they draft an engagement plan that can build trust for transformation.

**Community Excellence Social Impact Accelerator:** Individual leaders and groups at varying stages of their collaborative work put the key concepts of the Communities of Excellence Framework that can help move current efforts to the next level to work through leadership processes, a strategic action plan, and meaningful measurement that ties to desired outcomes.

Norling listed COE's priorities as follows:

- Partnerships
- Knowledge Sharing/Learning Management System
- The Role of AI in Improving Community Performance
- Delivering Quality Programs that Meet Communities Where They're At
- Building Community Leadership Capacity
- Rebrand! (Given that 2026 is one year away and that date is in COE's title)

# Overseers' Recommendations for the NIST Director and Department of Commerce

The Board of Overseers would like to recognize and express its appreciation for the efforts of the Baldrige Program staff to reimagine, redesign, and reestablish the Baldrige Award process. The changes made are clearly responsive to the recommendations from the external review and to the needs and expectations of participating organizations and other stakeholders, including NIST and the Department of Commerce. The Board members would also like to express their gratitude to NIST and the Department for supporting the Baldrige Program during this transformation.

The Board also wishes to express its belief that the mission of this unique, public-private partnership—to enhance the quality, performance, and long-term success of U.S. businesses and organizations of all kinds by recognizing role models and sharing proven practices—has served the nation well since its establishment in 1987 and continues to be relevant today.

#### Recommendations for the NIST Director and Department of Commerce

Repeating a key theme from the external evaluation report and to ensure that U.S. organizations receive the maximum benefits from participation with the Baldrige Program, the Overseers recommend that the Department of Commerce and NIST actively support the Baldrige Program's efforts to reach and engage with large, industry-leading businesses through enhanced outreach, promotion, and other resources. Specific examples include the following:

- Participating in the formal Baldrige Award ceremony by handing out awards to U.S. role-model organizations.
- Encouraging the President to honor the Baldrige Award recipient organizations by personally congratulating their top leadership at a brief White House event.
- Promoting participation in the Baldrige Award process among high-profile organizations and/or their sub-units. This includes industry-leading organizations appropriate for the prescreen "fasttrack" and all organizations interested in national recognition.
- Working in collaboration with the Baldrige Program to ensure efficient vetting and approval of organizations recommended for the Baldrige Award and those identified as eligible for the "fasttrack."
- Working in collaboration with the Baldrige Program to ensure efficient vetting and approval of individuals nominated for service as members of the Board of Overseers and Judges Panel.
- Requesting additional appropriations to support full implementation of the Baldrige Reimagined
  effort and implementation of a new Baldrige Award category to recognize and encourage
  excellence in our communities (this category was authorized by Congress in 2022).

#### Recommendations for the Baldrige Program

- Given the limited resources available, prioritize efficiency and effectiveness of core mission
  essential work, including the award process and implementation of the prescreen "fast-track."
  Don't undertake anything new, and get prescreen started as soon as possible.
- Prepare for the community-specific award, as appropriate.
- Continue efforts to leverage technology and shift to digital/online offerings. Determine resources needed to reach scale with these offerings and work with NIST, DOC, and partner organizations, as appropriate, to fill any gaps. Consider opportunities to leverage AI.
- Highlight "national recognition" in messaging around the award.

#### **Public Comment and New Business**

No requests for public comment were made and no new business was raised. Fangmeyer noted the proposed 2025 meeting dates and asked overseers to hold the time on their calendars.

- June 25, 2025 (virtual)
- December 10, 2025 (virtual)

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Gerry Agnes, Chair

Date

1-6-2025